

LUXEMBOURG



KEY STATISTICS

There is currently no national-level data-collection system on homelessness in Luxembourg.

The only official scientific study on homelessness and housing exclusion in Luxembourg was published by CEPS in 2007, on behalf of the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and Greater Region. It offered information on adult users of day centres, shelters, hostels, and supported housing during the week beginning 6th February 2006. 715 homeless people were identified, including:

- 30 people who had slept rough the previous night (ETHOS 1.1);
- 136 people who had stayed in a night shelter (ETHOS 2.1);
- 141 people who had stayed in a homeless hostel (ETHOS 3.1);
- 240 people who had stayed in supported housing;
- 40 people who had stayed in hospital or prison (ETHOS 6.1 and 6.2);
- 38 people who were housed by family or friends (ETHOS 8.1).

Since 2012, The Ministry of the Family and Integration collates reports of social service providers and publishes the results two times a year. The report of March 2017 shows that:

- People continue to use classical structures (day and night shelters for urgent situations), suggesting there are not enough long-term housing solutions.
- The total number of people using the hosting structures has increased steadily.
- In emergency accommodations, the male population predominates with 86%.
- In total, 420 people accessed services from about 17 organisations¹.



INCREASE/DECREASE IN NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

The annual evaluation of the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and Greater Region's "winter action plan" in collaboration with Caritas, Inter-Actions and the Red Cross Evaluation identified 297 homeless people during the winter 2008/2009, a figure that rose to 383 people during the winter 2009/2010, 422 people during winter 2010/2011 and reached 519 during winter 2011/2012. During winter 2012/2013, this number rose to 684 homeless people. In the subsequent years the numbers were: 828 in 2013/2014, 674 in 2014/2015, 522 in 2015/2016, 864 in 2016/17 and 873 in 2017/2018.

We need better national data to draw conclusions, but it is clear the problem is not decreasing.

CHANGE IN PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Psychiatric disorders, youth homelessness, long-term care and homeless people without social rights are the characteristics of homeless people in Luxembourg.

The data collected by Caritas for 2017 show that:

- 64% of the homeless people in the night shelter had psychiatric problems.
- 22% of the homeless population in the night shelter were under 30 years old and 9 % were under 25 years old; data also indicates an increasing proportion of people using its services for long periods.
- Between 31 and 37 % of the homeless population in the winter-action-plan had the nationality of a non-member state of the EU.
- The total number of homeless people in the winter-action-plan increased by 200% (according to the statistics of the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and Greater Region).

- The early signs of aging of homeless people required increased nursing services in the shelters.

According to the 2016 report by the Ministry of Family and Integration, the number of users of night shelters in Luxembourg is decreasing (from 658 in 2010 to 354 in 2016). In 2014 and 2015, this trend stopped, with 396 users in 2014 and 405 users in 2015. However, the average number of nights spent in the shelters has more than doubled between 2010 and 2016 (from 40 days to 100 days in average by client).

This suggests that specific interventions are required for long-term homelessness.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

In March 2013, the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and Greater Region announced and explained the national homelessness strategy. The strategy:

- was adopted on the 18th January 2013 by the Government;
- provides a framework for all the governmental activities to fight homelessness and housing exclusion;
- requires the collaboration of all governmental bodies and the NGOs working in this field;
- is based on the Housing First approach;
- has four main objectives:
 1. Provide homeless people with decent and stable housing;
 2. React rapidly and adequately to urgent situations;
 3. Prevent homelessness;
 4. Boost the existing measures and consolidate governance;
- will be implemented through 14 concrete actions;
- will run from 2013 to 2020.

The Ministry of Family and Integration conducted a mid-term evaluation of the national strategy in 2016. The results showed that the defined measures have been implemented to a high extent. One of the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation was to amend the future strategy with aspects of employment, occupation facilities and health.

TARGETED PREVENTION

The national strategy emphasises the importance of the issue of people leaving institutions who have lost their housing and are at risk of being unable to access social rights because they lack a legal place of residence.

HOUSING-LED APPROACHES

The national strategy is based on housing-led approaches, but the shift is not yet complete.

QUALITY OF HOMELESS SERVICES

The *offer of homeless services* run by Caritas can serve as a reference giving some insight into the quality of different services. Caritas provides day centres, outreach services, overnight shelters, employment-opportunities and housing solutions for homeless people. One of the night shelters from Caritas (Centre Ulysse) has place for 64 people, with dormitories with 2, 4, or 7 beds and single rooms. The other two night shelters in Luxembourg (Abrigado from the organization CNDS and Abrisud from the municipality Esch sur Alzette) have mostly dormitories with between 4 and 8 beds.

In April 2017, two "Low-threshold night centres" for very vulnerable homeless people were established for 10 persons each, run by the Red Cross and by Caritas.

Seven "Low-threshold day centers" for homeless people (each of the following organisations is responsible for one center: Caritas, CNDS, Inter-Actions, Red Cross CFL, Stëmm vun der Stross, Jugend an Drogenhëllef) offers advices, orientation and partly snacks or meals, showers and washing machines. At the Caritas day center alcohol consumption is allowed.

New projects

- In cooperation with a voluntary lawyer, Caritas offers since 2017 legal advice for homeless people.
- The outreach services "Streetwork" was supplemented by the additional service "Premier Appel" run by the organization Inter-Actions. The service "Premier Appel" offers outreach service outside the regular opening hours of the other services and works in close cooperation with all the services for homeless person.

- The organisation “Jugend an Drogenhëllef” will open an additional drug consumption room at the end of 2018 in the city Esch sur Alzette.
- Caritas is planning an assisted living project “transition house” for people released from the prison. A benefit analysis and a public event have already taken place.
- The construction of a new winter shelter for 200 homeless persons will be completed in 2019.
- The different organisations with services for homeless people have intensified their cooperation through joint meetings, internships or visits in the various facilities.
- The federation of social sector organisations (FEDAS) has launched a working group on homelessness, housing and health.

REMARKS ON RESEARCH

A scientific study on homelessness and housing exclusion in Luxembourg conducted by CEPS was published in 2007 (see above).

The preparatory work on a national strategy has underlined the need for better research, including statistical monitoring of homelessness and the impact of the future strategy. Caritas Home and Solidarity in collaboration with the Public Health Research Centre (PRC Health) have launched a study on the number of people who stay for long time in night shelters without managing to find another housing solution.

A qualitative evaluation of one of the housing first projects in Luxembourg was conducted from 2015 to 2016 and underlined the improved quality of life for the participating homeless people.

The study “Analyse du mal-logement et de l’exclusion liée au logement” from the research centre LISER identified two categories of households with financial fragility and/or living in poor housing conditions: tenants on the private market, who were heavily impacted by the sharp increase of rents over the last decade, and poor young households that spend often more than 40% of their income on rent.

REMARKS ON BUDGET EVOLUTION

The Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and Greater Region and the two biggest municipalities have gradually increased the budget for care for homeless people. Recent investments have been made in the area of youth homelessness and, in line with the homelessness strategy, there are plans to invest in a more housing-led approach in the future.

The service LEA (*logements encadrés et accompagnés*) of Caritas applies a Housing First approach since 2004. Caritas, together with other social organisations, continues working on Housing First inspired initiatives. In 2015 a “Communal Housing first project” for long term homeless people has been put in place. A second “Pathways housing first” project for homeless people with mental or psychiatric issues is planned. Both are organized in intense cooperation with external partners (CHNP, Hellef Doheem, Help).

Others have also engaged in housing first inspired projects (CNDS, CHNP, Abrisud).

REMARKS ON KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

- **Positive**

Housing is considered as the most urgent policy issue at national level and debates about policy solutions are widespread at local and national level.

The social rental agency “AIS” created in 2009 is growing regularly. In 2017 the agency provided dwellings for 1425 people with a housing problem as defined by ETHOS.

The new social agency “AIS Kordall” was created in the south of Luxembourg at the end of 2015 and provided 51 dwellings for 192 people by the end of 2016.

Since 2013, social housing construction has been intensified and comprised 533 residential construction projects in 2016 with a total number of 10,981 residential units. Municipalities initiated half of the most recent construction projects (61 construction projects).

The Government will evaluate the activities of the Housing Fund (Fonds du logement) and the national Housing Corporation (SNHBM) with respect to the creation of social housing.

- **Negative**

In the context of the debate on the decentralisation of services for homeless people, municipalities have rarely been willing to accept any establishment of transitional or emergency structures, even permanent housing for homeless people within their territories. Housing costs continue to increase adding to the already delicate housing situation.

REFERENCES

Annual report Caritas

Informations from service providers for homeless people

<https://logement.public.lu/fr/politique-logement/politique-generale.html>

<https://mfamigr.gouvernement.lu/fr/le-ministere/attributions/solidarite.html>